



August 2016

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES

Air Force Needs to
Consistently Assess
Personnel
Requirements to
Appropriately Size Its
Headquarters
Reserve Components

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-16-538](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

DOD has sought and Congress has directed the department to identify areas to reduce costs by assessing headquarters and overhead functions. The Army and Air Force each have two Reserve Components—a National Guard and a Reserve—with approximately 715,000 members combined, comprising about one-half (53 percent) and one-third (36 percent) of the Army's and Air Force's total authorized personnel, respectively.

Senate Report 114-49 included a provision for GAO to review DOD's Army and Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters. Among other things, this report (1) describes the trends in authorized full-time support positions at Army and Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters as well as in four selected states since fiscal year 2013 and (2) evaluates the extent to which DOD assessed personnel requirements for the Army and Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters since fiscal year 2013. GAO analyzed and interviewed DOD officials responsible for documentation, such as guidance and assessments, and conducted nongeneralizable case studies in four selected states that GAO reviewed in a November 2013 report.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making two recommendations, including that the Air Force revise its guidance to clarify the frequency with which all of its Reserve Component headquarters should assess personnel requirements. DOD generally agreed with the recommendations.

View [GAO-16-538](#). For more information, contact Andrew J. Von Ah at (213) 830-1011 or vonaha@gao.gov.

August 2016

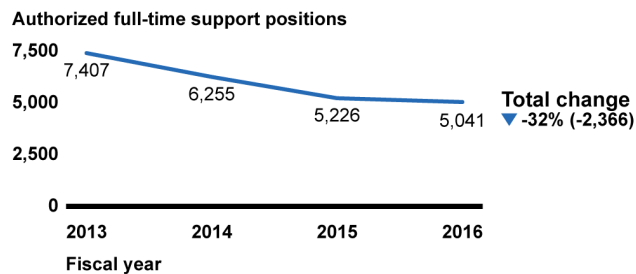
NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES

Air Force Needs to Consistently Assess Personnel Requirements to Appropriately Size Its Headquarters Reserve Components

What GAO Found

From fiscal years 2013 through 2016, the total number of authorized full-time support positions at the Army's and Air Force's Reserve Components' headquarters—which oversee subordinate units, or provide administrative or overhead support—decreased from 7,407 to 5,041 positions overall (about 32 percent, see figure). Department of Defense (DOD) officials attribute this decrease to the Deputy Secretary of Defense's headquarters reduction efforts. Each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam also have National Guard forces that can be activated for federal missions. Over the same period, authorized full-time support positions for the National Guard increased in the selected four states GAO reviewed: Delaware, Georgia, New Jersey, and Texas.

Trends in Army and Air Force Headquarters Reserve Components' Combined Authorized Full-Time Support Positions, since Fiscal Year 2013



Source: GAO analysis of Army and Air Force Reserve Components data. | GAO-16-538

The Army and Air Force Reserve Components have assessed some of their headquarters' personnel requirements, but not all relevant Air Force organizations have done so and in the time frames specified in guidance. The Army has assessed and validated 49 percent of the aggregate personnel requirements of its Reserve Components' headquarters, but officials told GAO that the Army is currently focusing on conducting non-headquarters assessments. Since November 2013, the Air Force has not assessed two of its Reserve Component headquarters: Headquarters, Air National Guard and the Office of the Director, Air National Guard. An Air Force official stated that two different Air Force guidance documents should be used in tandem, but Air National Guard officials were unaware of this. The same Air Force official stated that the Air Force would modify the existing guidance within the year to clarify that all Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters should conduct assessments of personnel requirements. Additionally, Air Force organizations were unclear about the frequency with which they should conduct assessments. While the guidance states that assessments should be done biannually, or twice a year, Air Force organizations that have conducted assessments have done so generally every 1 or 2 years. As the Air Force considers revising its guidance, it has an opportunity to clarify the frequency with which its organizations should conduct these assessments.

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Abbreviations

DOD Department of Defense

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August 12, 2016

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

The Army and Air Force Reserve Components have approximately 715,000 members, and comprise about one-half (53 percent) and one-third (36 percent) of the Army's and Air Force's total authorized personnel, respectively.¹ These Reserve Components provide vital warfighting capabilities to the Department of Defense's (DOD) operations, including those in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past 15 years. Additionally, the National Guard, which has a dual state and federal status, plays an important role in responding to natural disasters and domestic incidents within the United States.

The National Guard and the Army and Air Force Reserve Components have various federally-funded headquarters activities, including the National Guard Bureau; Army National Guard Directorate; Office of the Director, Air National Guard; Headquarters, Air National Guard; Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve; Headquarters, U.S. Army Reserve Command; Office of the Chief of the Air Force Reserve; and Headquarters, Air Force Reserve Command. These headquarters activities oversee subordinate units, and perform administrative or

¹The Reserve Components of the Armed Forces include the Army National Guard of the United States, the Army Reserve, the Navy Reserve, the Marine Corps Reserve, the Air National Guard of the United States, the Air Force Reserve, and the Coast Guard Reserve. Our review is focused on the Army and Air Force organizations.

overhead functions—such as the management of documents, personnel programs, and training and educational programs—identified by DOD as Major Headquarters Activities.² In addition, when not activated for federal missions, each state’s National Guard forces are commanded by the state’s Adjutant General, who also commands the Joint Force Headquarters – State. Each of the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State, located in each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam, is comprised of a Joint staff element, Army National Guard and Air National Guard staff elements, and the personal and special staff of the State Adjutant General.³ The Reserve Components have 75 organizations that perform management functions, although not all organizations are designated as Major DOD Headquarters Activities.⁴ Additionally, similar to the Active Components, the Reserve Components are required to conduct personnel assessments to identify the number of positions required to carry out their missions and fulfil their workload. For example, the Army and the Air Force use such assessment results to inform the number of recommended positions documented on their annual budget requests and respective manning documents. Moreover, these assessment results help the Army and Air Force identify efficiencies, by redistributing work amongst fewer positions, and may present opportunities to consolidate or centralize overlapping functions

²DOD Instruction (DODI) 5100.73, *Major DOD Headquarters Activities* (Dec. 1, 2007) (incorporating changes June 12, 2012), defines Major Headquarters Activities as those headquarters (and the direct support integral to their operation) whose primary mission is to manage or command the programs and operations of DOD, its components, and their major military units, organizations, or agencies. DODI 5100.73 designates those activities considered to be Major Headquarters Activities of the Reserve Component management activities identified in this report; however, the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve and the Office of the Chief of the Air Force Reserve are not designated as Major DOD Headquarters Activities.

³The Joint staff element consists of the State Adjutant General and the Office of the State Adjutant General, the Assistant Adjutant General, Army National Guard; the Assistant Adjutant General, Air National Guard, and the Director of the National Guard Joint Force Headquarters – State Joint staff.

⁴The 75 Reserve Component’s headquarters include the National Guard Bureau; Army National Guard Directorate; Office of the Director, Air National Guard; Headquarters, Air National Guard; Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve; U.S. Army Reserve Command; Office of the Chief of the Air Force Reserve; Headquarters, Air Force Reserve Command; 4 Army Reserve regional support commands; 7 Army Reserve functional commands; 3 Numbered Air Forces; and the National Guard’s 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State. The 4 Army Reserve regional support and 7 functional commands as well as the 4th, 10th, and 22nd Numbered Air Forces are not included in the scope of our review.

and eliminate unnecessary overlap and duplication. For the Reserve Components, these positions include both part-time drilling reservist positions and full-time support positions.⁵

The Senate and House Armed Services Committees have recognized DOD's efforts to identify and implement headquarters-related efficiencies. In doing so, the committees have also raised questions about whether the department implements these efficiencies based on assessments of functions,⁶ which they believe could result in identification of greater cost savings, and about DOD's visibility into resources being devoted across organizations to similar functions and missions.⁷ The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 directed DOD to conduct a comprehensive review of its headquarters for, among other things, purposes of consolidating and streamlining headquarters functions.⁸ In addition, the Deputy Secretary of Defense also directed a 25 percent cost

⁵Full-time support personnel consist of five categories of personnel including: full-time reservists (active Guard/Reserve), military technicians, active-component personnel, nondual-status technicians, and federal civilian employees. Full-time support personnel provide services and administrative support to the part-time drilling reservists.

⁶DOD defines a function as the type of work performed in direct support of military and civil works missions, in fulfillment of defense-related U.S. international commitments, and in permanent service outside DOD at the White House, Congress, and federal and state agencies. Examples of functions include legal services, budget support, systems acquisition, and education and training. See Office of the Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *2015 Inherently Governmental and Commercial Activities Data Call* (Oct. 9, 2014).

⁷For example, the House Armed Services Committee expressed concern about DOD seeking to implement headquarters-related efficiencies and across-the-board personnel reductions without a comprehensive assessment of functional requirements and cost drivers, among other things. H.R. Rep. No. 113-446, accompanying H.R. 4435 (2014). Similarly, the Senate Armed Services Committee stated that, to achieve significant savings, the Secretary of Defense must focus on consolidating and eliminating organizations and personnel that perform similar functions and missions. S. Rep. No. 113-176 accompanying S. 2410 (2014).

⁸The National Defense Authorization Act, 2016 requires the Secretary of Defense to modify the headquarters reduction plan required by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014 (10 U.S.C. § 111 note) to ensure that DOD achieves savings in the total funding available for major DOD headquarters activities by fiscal year 2020 that are not less than 25 percent of the baseline amount. The baseline amount is the amount authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2016 for major DOD headquarters activities, adjusted by a credit for reductions in such headquarters activities that are documented as having been accomplished in earlier fiscal years in accordance with the December 2013 directive by the Secretary of Defense requiring a 20 percent cut in management headquarters spending. Pub. L. No. 114-92, § 346(b)(1) (Nov. 25, 2015).

reduction across all appropriations funding for Major DOD Headquarters Activities across the military departments, the Office of the Secretary of Defense staff, the Joint Staff, defense agencies and field activities, and the combatant commands without regard to action by Congress.⁹ This reduction is to be based on a list of Major Headquarters Activities as designated in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016,¹⁰ and is to cover a period from fiscal years 2017 to 2020, with a credit granted for headquarters cost reductions taken pursuant to the previously ordered 20 percent reduction for fiscal years 2014 through 2019.¹¹ We previously found that DOD did not have the information necessary to reliably report on its entire headquarters staff.¹² We recommended that DOD determine which organizations and portions of organizations should be considered as headquarters, and issue a revised DOD Instruction 5100.73, Major DOD Headquarters Activities, to include all major DOD headquarters activity organizations. DOD concurred with the intent of our recommendation. However, as of December 2015, DOD had not updated the Instruction with the organizations, or portions of organizations, that should be included in its count of headquarters activities in accordance with this definition.

Our prior work has also found that amid DOD's efforts to find efficiencies and reduce overhead, some Reserve Components' headquarters have grown.¹³ In November 2013, we found that while some of this growth was due to reducing reliance on contractors and expanding missions, DOD did not know whether its various Reserve Components' headquarters were sized with the appropriate positions needed to accomplish their missions.

⁹Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Cost Reduction Targets for Major Headquarters* (Aug. 24, 2015).

¹⁰Pub. L. No. 114-92, § 346(b)(3) (Nov. 25, 2015).

¹¹In July 2013, the Deputy Secretary of Defense called for a 20 percent cut in management headquarters spending throughout the department, to include spending within headquarters organizations such as OSD, the Joint Staff, and the military services' secretariats and military staffs. Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *20% Headquarters Reductions* (July 31, 2013).

¹²GAO, *Defense Management: Actions Needed to Ensure National Guard and Reserve Headquarters Are Sized to Be Efficient*, [GAO-14-71](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 12, 2013); *Defense Headquarters: Further Efforts to Examine Resource Needs and Improve Data Could Provide Additional Opportunities for Cost Savings*, [GAO-12-345](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 21, 2012).

¹³[GAO-14-71](#).

We also found that for fiscal year 2013, nearly 100 percent of the positions funded at the National Guard Bureau, Office of the Director, Air National Guard, Army National Guard Directorate, U.S. Army Reserve Command, and Headquarters, Air Force Reserve were for full-time support. We recommended DOD evaluate the size of its various Reserve Components' headquarters and ensure that they have the minimum positions needed to complete their assigned missions, among other things. DOD generally concurred with our recommendations and has since taken steps to refine its process for determining and validating personnel requirements.

Senate Report 114-49, accompanying S. 1376, included a provision for us to evaluate the extent to which DOD has taken steps to eliminate or consolidate duplicative functions, and whether the National Guard reviewed its Joint Force Headquarters – State for greater efficiencies by consolidating roles that are filled by both Army and Air National Guard members. In this report, we (1) describe the trends in authorized full-time support positions at Army and Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters, and the Army and Air staff elements for selected National Guards' Joint Force Headquarters – State since fiscal year 2013; (2) evaluate the extent to which DOD has assessed personnel requirements for its Army and Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters since November 2013; and (3) evaluate the extent to which DOD has assessed personnel requirements for the Army, Air, and Joint staff elements of the National Guards' Joint Force Headquarters – State since November 2013.

To address our objectives, we obtained and reviewed data on authorized full-time support positions at the Army and Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters, and the Army and Air staff elements within four selected National Guards' Joint Force Headquarters – State reviewed from fiscal year 2013 through fiscal year 2016.¹⁴ We focused our review on these full-time support positions given the high percentage of these positions in some Reserve Component headquarters identified in our prior review. We selected these years to identify changes, if any, that occurred in these Reserve Components' headquarters' size and structure since our last review in November 2013, by using fiscal year 2013 as our

¹⁴Data were not available for authorized positions of the Joint staff elements in the Joint Force Headquarters – State.

baseline year for comparison and reporting purposes. Because our prior work focused on these seven Reserve Components' headquarters organizations, we chose to focus on these headquarters, too, for consistency.¹⁵ For similar reasons, we also selected the same non-generalizable sample of four Joint Force Headquarters – State reviewed in our November 2013 report—Delaware, Georgia, New Jersey, and Texas—as case studies for this review to obtain perspectives from state officials on efforts associated with assessing their state's personnel requirements. To ensure the reliability of the personnel data, we interviewed knowledgeable officials about the data and internal controls on the systems that contain them.¹⁶ On the basis of these steps, we determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this audit. We also evaluated the National Guard Bureau's and military services' implementation of their processes for assessing personnel requirements at the seven Army and Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters cited above by reviewing relevant guidance and documentation.¹⁷ Where available, we analyzed manpower assessments and related documents to understand the status of assessment efforts since our last review in November 2013; however, we did not evaluate the results of these assessments. For this review, we also discuss DOD's efforts to implement recommendations from our November 2013 report. To identify and assess DOD's efforts to implement our prior recommendations, we interviewed knowledgeable officials from the Army and Air Force as well as the same sample of four Joint Force Headquarters – State and reviewed relevant documentation.¹⁸ For more information on our scope and methodology, see appendix I.

¹⁵[GAO-14-71](#).

¹⁶For the Army, the Reserve Components' headquarters had their personnel authorizations documented on tables of distribution and allowances, and the National Guards' Joint Force Headquarters – States' Army staff had their personnel authorizations documented on vouchers. For the Air Force, these headquarters had their personnel authorizations documented on unit manning documents.

¹⁷For the purposes of this report, personnel requirements are positions that the Army and Air Force have approved for funding on a manpower document—a document that identifies the positions and spaces that have been authorized—for the headquarters we identified. Authorizations are the number of personnel positions that each component of the military is authorized by Congress to have and receive funding, and may not match the requirements identified by the services.

¹⁸[GAO-14-71](#).

We conducted this performance audit from August 2015 to August 2016 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

Army and Air Force Reserve Components

The Army and Air Force each have an active component and two Reserve Components—a National Guard and Reserve. The Army and Air Force Reserve Components have numerous headquarters organizations that manage and oversee subordinate units, or perform administrative or overhead functions. The National Guard has two elements—the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard—that mostly consist of part-time forces responsible for both federal and state missions. The National Guard’s dual state and federal role means that state Governors have command and control over National Guard units when they are not performing federal missions or other federal service. The Army National Guard provides a balance of combat, combat support, and combat sustainment capabilities. The Air National Guard provides a broad range of ready combat and combat support capabilities, such as tactical airlift and special operations. The Army Reserve and Air Force Reserve (Reserves) also largely consist of part-time forces, but are responsible for federal missions. The Army Reserve provides combat support and combat sustainment capabilities as well as individual soldiers through the Individual Ready Reserve and Individual Mobilization Augmentation programs.¹⁹ The Air Force Reserve provides a broad range of combat and combat support capabilities. In addition to these part-time forces,

¹⁹The Individual Ready Reserve is a manpower pool consisting of individuals who have had some training or who have served previously in the active component or in the selected reserve, and may have some period of their military service obligation remaining. Individual Mobilization Augmentees are individual reservists attending drills who receive training and are preassigned to an active component organization, Selective Service System, or Federal Emergency Management Agency organization’s billet that must be filled on, or shortly after, mobilization.

both the National Guard and the Reserves use full-time support positions to assist in the organization, administration, recruitment, instruction, training, maintenance, and supply support to the Reserve Component.²⁰

As table 1 shows, for fiscal year 2016, the Army National Guard is authorized 342,000 soldiers, and the Army Reserve 198,000 soldiers, which collectively constitute about 53 percent of the Army’s total authorized end strength.²¹ Likewise, the Air National Guard is authorized 105,500 military personnel, and the Air Force Reserve has 69,200 military personnel, which collectively are about 36 percent of the Air Force’s fiscal year 2016 total authorized end strength.

Table 1: Army and Air Force Reserve Components’ Authorized Military End Strength, Fiscal Year 2016

Military service	Component	Authorized end strength^a
Army	Active Army	475,000
	Army National Guard	342,000
	Army Reserve	198,000
	Total Army	1,015,000
Air Force	Active Air Force	317,000
	Air National Guard	105,500
	Air Force Reserve	69,200
	Total Air Force	491,700

Source: GAO analysis of the National Defense Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2016, Pub. L. No. 114-92 (Nov. 25, 2015). | GAO-16-538

^aAuthorized end strength is the number of personnel that each component (Active, National Guard, and Reserve) of a military service is authorized by Congress to have at the end of a given fiscal year.

National Guard
Headquarters

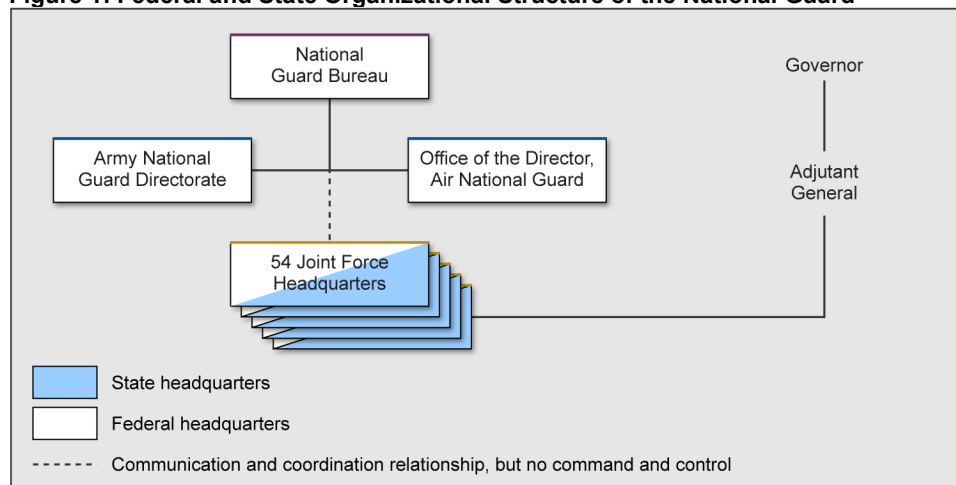
The National Guard maintains a number of headquarters activities that are responsible for managing and overseeing subordinate units. The National Guard Bureau consists of the Office of the Chief, National Guard Bureau; the National Guard Joint Staff; the Office of the Director, Army National Guard; Office of the Director, Air National Guard; and

²⁰Full-time support positions in general are more expensive than part-time positions because they are paid as full-time employees and receive greater compensation and benefits such as retirement, health care, and education.

²¹Authorized end strength is the number of personnel that each component (Active, National Guard, and Reserve) of a military service is authorized by Congress to have at the end of a given fiscal year.

Headquarters, Air National Guard. The National Guard Bureau Chief provides liaison, coordination, assistance, and support to the 54 National Guard Joint Force Headquarters – State. Figure 1 shows the organizational structure of the National Guard.

Figure 1: Federal and State Organizational Structure of the National Guard



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense guidance and data. | GAO-16-538

The National Guard Bureau is managed by the Chief of the National Guard Bureau—a four-star General who was placed on the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2011.²² Reporting to the Chief are two Lieutenant Generals who manage the Office of the Director, Army National Guard (Army National Guard Directorate) and the Office of the Director, Air National Guard, respectively. When not activated for federal missions, each state's National Guard's forces are commanded by the Adjutant General of the state, who also commands their respective Joint Force Headquarters – State. These headquarters are responsible for coordinating the planning, training, and execution of National Guard homeland defense, civil support, and other domestic emergency missions within the United States. They also manage the National Guard's readiness and prepare National Guard units for federal mobilization. The 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State each are to consist of a Joint staff element, Army staff element, and Air staff element. Each of these elements is subject to

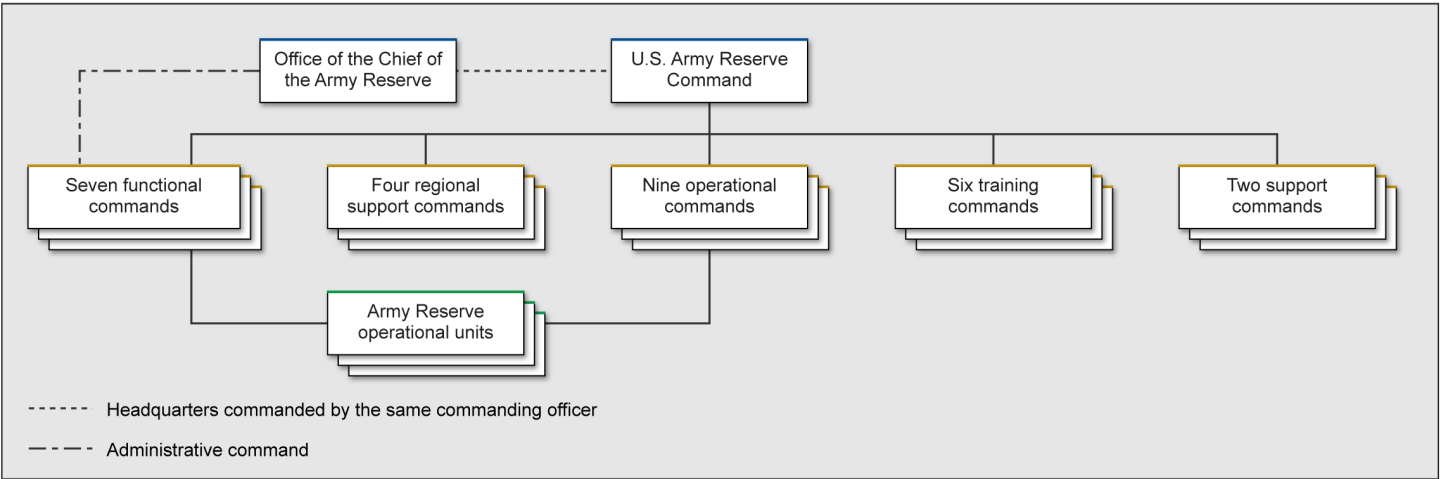
²²National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, Pub. L. No. 112-81 § 512 (Dec. 31, 2011).

processes for assessing and validating personnel requirements that are specific to their respective organization.

Army Reserve and Air Force Reserve Headquarters

The Army Reserve and Air Force Reserve maintain 18 headquarters activities that manage or oversee subordinate units. The Army Reserve headquarters include the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve; U.S. Army Reserve Command; four regional support commands; and seven functional commands. The Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve and the U.S. Army Reserve Command are commanded by the same Lieutenant General who also sits on the Army Staff.²³ Reporting to the Chief are 28 general officers who command support and functional commands, ensure the readiness of personnel, and maintain reserve installations within the United States, as shown in figure 2.

Figure 2: Organization of Army Reserve Headquarters



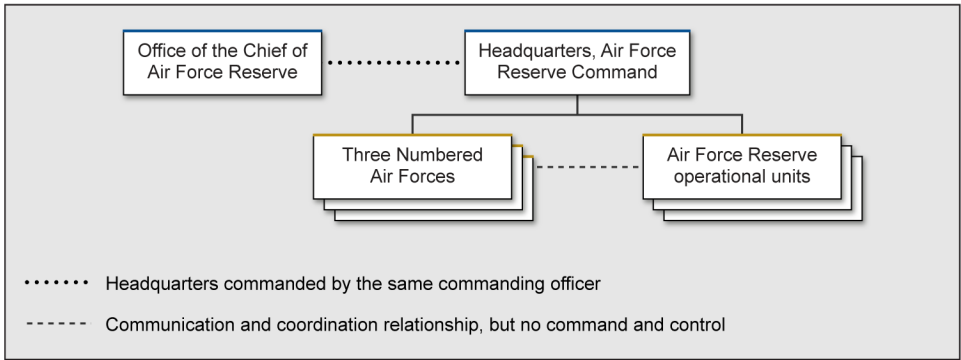
Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense data. | GAO-16-538

There are five Air Force Reserve headquarters that include the Office of the Chief of the Air Force Reserve; Headquarters, Air Force Reserve

²³DOD refers to the arrangement in which the incumbent officer has responsibilities to two organizations as a “dual hat” position.

Command; and the 4th, 10th, and 22nd Numbered Air Forces.²⁴ The Office of the Chief of the Air Force Reserve, and Headquarters, Air Force Reserve Command are commanded by the same Lieutenant General who also sits on the Air Staff. Reporting to the Air Force Reserve Commander, who also functions as the Chief of the Air Force Reserve, are five general officers who help ensure the readiness of Air Force Reserve forces, as shown in figure 3.

Figure 3: Organization of Air Force Reserve Headquarters



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense data. | GAO-16-538

Processes and Reporting Requirements for Sizing and Structuring Headquarters Organizations

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Army, and the Air Force have processes to size and structure headquarters organizations. In general, these processes seek to provide the minimum number of positions needed to accomplish missions and performance objectives. For example, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 1001.01B, Joint Manpower and Personnel Program (Oct. 7, 2014) requires the military departments²⁵ and DOD agencies to conduct periodic assessments that determine and validate personnel requirements of all joint Major Headquarters Activities. Additionally, Congress requires DOD to report personnel data²⁶ for its Major Headquarters Activities to support

²⁴The Numbered Air Forces are not part of the department's review of Major Headquarters Activities.

²⁵The three military departments are the Departments of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. The Marine Corps falls under the Department of the Navy.

²⁶DOD is required to provide Congress with an annual Defense Manpower Requirements Report on a number of personnel issues, including the number of positions assigned to Major Headquarters Activities in the previous year and estimates of such numbers for the current and subsequent fiscal year.

congressional oversight of these headquarters, which are listed in a DOD instruction.²⁷

Since Fiscal Year 2013, Authorized Full-Time Support Positions at Army and Air Force Reserve Components' Headquarters Have Decreased, while Such Positions at Four Selected Joint Force Headquarters – State Reviewed Have Increased

We found that the overall number of authorized full-time support positions at the Army's and Air Force's Reserve Components' headquarters has decreased since our last review in November 2013,²⁸ primarily due to DOD's efforts to implement the Deputy Secretary of Defense's direction to reduce funding for headquarters across the department by 20 percent.²⁹ However, authorized full-time support positions at the Army and Air staff elements at the four selected Joint Force Headquarters – State have increased during the same time frame.

²⁷DODI 5100.73.

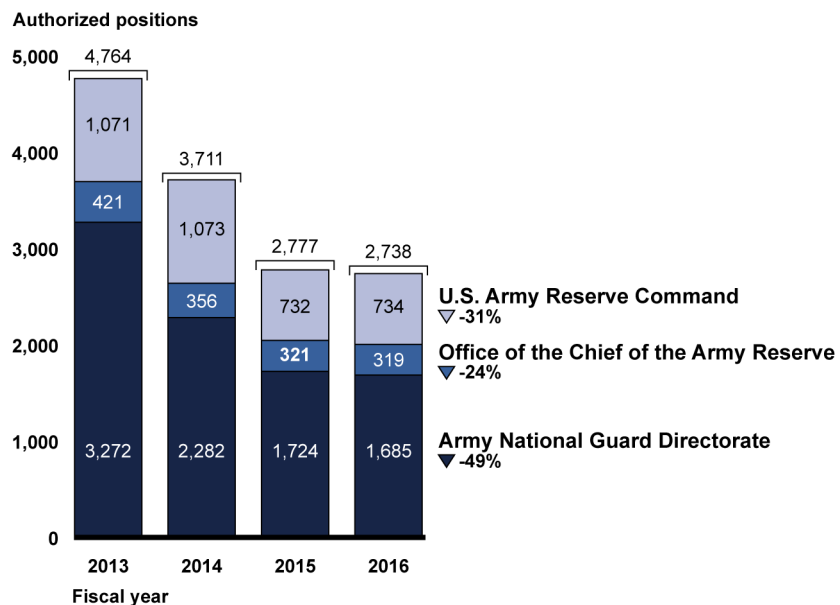
²⁸We focused on full-time support positions in our current review. For comparison and reporting purposes, we use fiscal year 2013 as our baseline year because this was the last year we reported on this issue.

²⁹Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *20% Headquarters Reductions* (July 31, 2013).

Authorized Full-Time Support Positions at the Army National Guard and Reserve Components' Headquarters Have Decreased since Fiscal Year 2013

Since fiscal year 2013, the total number of authorized full-time support positions for the Army National Guard and Reserve Components' headquarters decreased from 4,764 to 2,738—a net decrease of about 40 percent. Overall, the Army National Guard Directorate decreased by 1,587 authorized positions (49 percent) and the Army Reserves—that is the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve and U.S. Army Reserve command—decreased by 102 authorized positions (24 percent) and 337 authorized positions (31 percent), respectively.³⁰ According to an Army official, this reduction in the number of authorized full-time support positions was in line with those DOD directed for the Department of the Army. Figure 4 shows the trends in Army Reserve Components' headquarters' authorized full-time support positions since fiscal year 2013.

Figure 4: Trends in Army National Guard and Reserve Headquarters Components' Authorized Full-Time Support Positions, since Fiscal Year 2013



Source: GAO analysis of Army National Guard data. | GAO-16-538

³⁰ According to Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve officials, their office has completed the Secretary of the Army- directed review to reduce the size of its staff and has programmed and documented an additional reduction of 77 (24 percent) military and civilian positions from the current staffing, which will continue through fiscal year 2019.

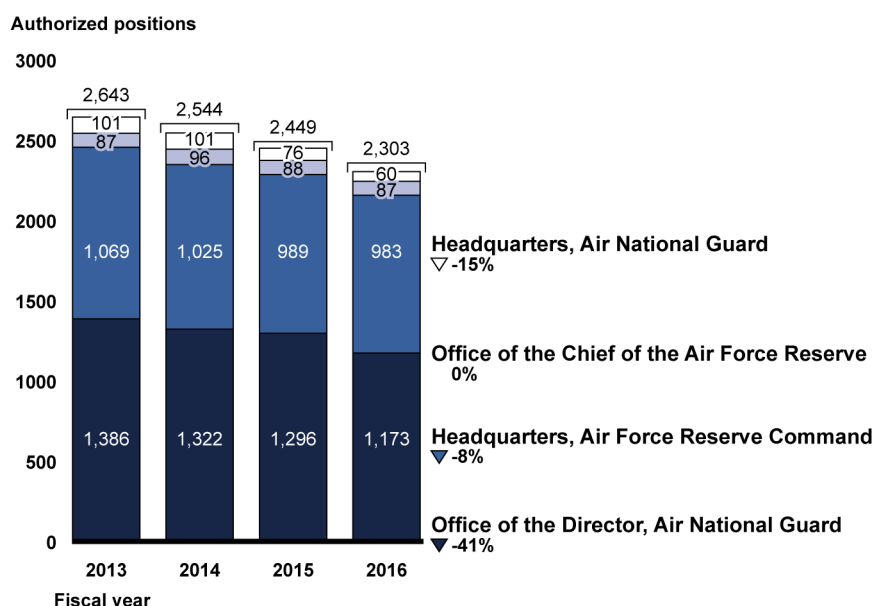
According to Army officials, reductions in the Army's authorized full-time support positions are intended to better align missions with resources, although an unintended consequence of these reductions is a redistribution of work to fewer personnel. For example, Army officials told us some Army National Guard and Reserve headquarters organizations have been assigned additional functions that increased their workload since their last assessment. Army officials stated that in response, they have reorganized and updated duties to accommodate the increased workload requirements that are critical or required by statute.

Since fiscal year 2013, the total number of authorized full-time support positions for the Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters decreased from 2,643 to 2,303—a net decrease of 13 percent.³¹ Overall, Headquarters, Air National Guard; Headquarters, Air Force Reserve Command; and the Office of the Director, Air National Guard decreased by 213 authorized positions (15 percent), 86 authorized positions (8 percent), and 41 authorized positions (41 percent), respectively. The Office of the Chief of the Air Force Reserve has generally remained the same across the 4-year period. According to an Air Force official, this significant reduction in the number of authorized full-time support positions was made in response to the Deputy Secretary of Defense's headquarters reduction efforts.³² Air Force officials also told us that without a finalized definition for Major Headquarters Activities, it is difficult to establish a baseline for determining how many personnel requirements exist because it remains unclear which positions would be eliminated by the reductions. In addition, Air Force officials stated that it is challenging to identify any additional full-time support positions to eliminate following the various reductions the department has implemented. Figure 5 shows the trends in authorized Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters' positions since fiscal year 2013.

³¹The reported reductions do not include the full-time positions authorized to the Air Force Reserve Numbered Air Forces across the 3-year period.

³²Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *20% Headquarters Reductions* (July 31, 2013).

Figure 5: Trends in Air Force Reserve Headquarters Components' Authorized Full-Time Support Positions, since Fiscal Year 2013



Source: GAO analysis of Air National Guard and Reserve data. | GAO-16-538

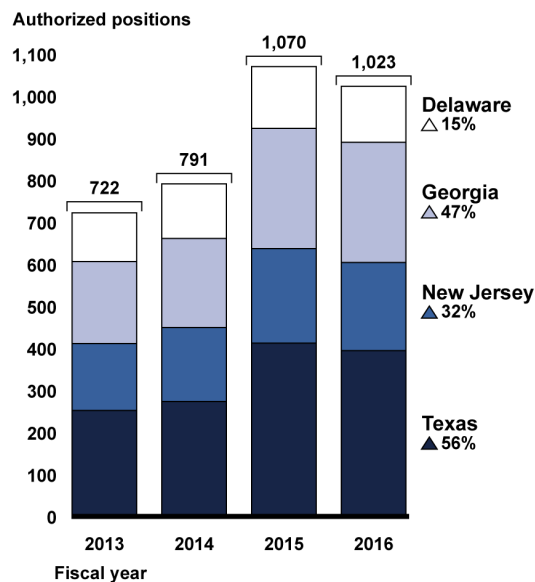
Authorized Full-Time Support Positions for the Army and Air National Guard Staff Elements at the Selected Four Joint Force Headquarters – State Have Increased since Fiscal Year 2013

In contrast, our analysis of Army National Guard staff elements within the four Joint Force Headquarters – State we selected—Delaware, Georgia, New Jersey, and Texas—shows that the total net change in authorized full-time support positions at these state Joint Headquarters increased by 301 (42 percent) positions since fiscal year 2013, and all four saw an increase in the number of authorized positions during the same time frame.³³ Specifically, the Delaware, Georgia, New Jersey, and Texas headquarters' authorized full-time support positions increased by a total of 17 (15 percent), 91 (47 percent), 51 (32 percent), and 142 (56 percent) authorized positions, respectively. According to an Army National Guard official, the increases in authorized positions from fiscal year 2013 through fiscal year 2016 resulted from the Joint Force Headquarters – State, including the four we selected, meeting increased mission

³³For comparison and reporting purposes, we use fiscal year 2013 as our baseline year because this was the last year we reported on this issue.

requirements.³⁴ Figure 6 shows the trends in authorized full-time support positions within the Army National Guard staff elements in those four Joint Force Headquarters – State since fiscal year 2013.

Figure 6: Army National Guard Staff Elements' Authorized Full-Time Support Positions at Select Joint Force Headquarters – State, since Fiscal Year 2013



Source: GAO analysis of Army National Guard data. | GAO-16-538

^aNumbers for each Joint Force Headquarters-State come from Army National Guard personnel documents that identify the number of authorized full-time support positions at each of the selected Joint Force Headquarters – State in the given fiscal year.

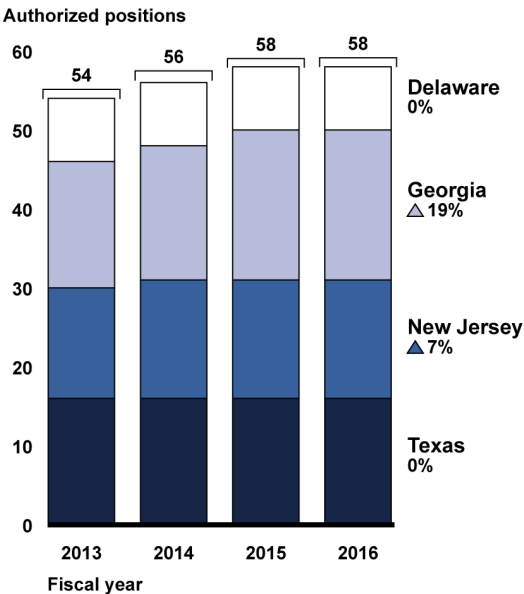
Our analysis of Air National Guard staff elements for these four Joint Force Headquarters – State—Delaware, Georgia, New Jersey, and Texas—showed that, although the Air staff elements increased by a total net change of four (7 percent) authorized full-time support positions since fiscal year 2013,³⁵ only Georgia and New Jersey saw an increase in the number of positions, increasing by three (19 percent) and one (7 percent),

³⁴The same cognizant Army National Guard official also stated that, because the Adjutant General for each of the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State has the flexibility to fill authorized full-time support positions as they deem appropriate, the Adjutant General may choose not to use all of these authorized positions.

³⁵For comparison and reporting purposes, we use fiscal year 2013 as our baseline year, because this was the last year we reported on this issue.

respectively, which, according to an Air National Guard official, was due to these states' decisions to fund additional authorized full-time support positions.³⁶ Delaware and Texas neither gained nor lost authorized positions. Figure 7 shows authorized full-time support positions within the Air National Guard staff elements in those Joint Force Headquarters – State since fiscal year 2013.

Figure 7: Air National Guard Staff Elements' Authorized Full-Time Support Positions at Select Joint Force Headquarters – State, since Fiscal Year 2013



Source: GAO analysis of Air National Guard data. | GAO-16-538

^aNumbers for each Joint Force Headquarters-State come from Air National Guard personnel documents that identify the number of authorized full-time support positions at each of the selected Joint Force Headquarters – State in the given fiscal year.

³⁶Specifically, this increase was due to the realignment of Active Guard Reserve and Technician funding from other programs, which was implemented through the use of the Manpower Change Request process, according to an Air National Guard official.

Army and Air Force Reserve Components Have Assessed Some Headquarters Personnel Requirements, but the Air Force Has Not Clearly Communicated Guidance for These Assessments

The Army and Air Force Reserve Components have assessed some of their headquarters' personnel requirements, but the Air Force has not clearly communicated guidance on which organizations should conduct the assessments and how frequently they should be conducted. Further, the National Guard Bureau has not developed a process to externally validate the results of its recent assessment of personnel requirements. As a result, DOD has not determined whether the Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters and the National Guard Bureau are appropriately sized.

The Army Has Assessed Some of the Personnel Requirements for Its Reserve Components' Headquarters

The Army has assessed some of the personnel requirements at its headquarters by having personnel requirements reviewed and validated by the U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency on behalf of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. In our November 2013 report, we recommended that the Secretary of the Army have Army National Guard and Reserve headquarters personnel requirements validated within required time frames³⁷ by including them in the U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency's schedule for reassessment and validation.³⁸ In response to our previous recommendation, DOD noted it had several ongoing efforts intended to assess Army Reserve Components' full-time support requirements. The Army has tracked its progress in implementing these efforts and as of April 2016, has assessed and validated 10,091 of 20,610 (49 percent) aggregate personnel requirements for the Army National Guard and Reserve

³⁷The Army's manpower-management regulation requires that Army headquarters be reassessed on a 2- to 5-year cycle, with the optimal time period being every 3 years. Army Regulation 570-4, *Manpower Management* (Feb. 8, 2006).

³⁸[GAO-14-71](#).

headquarters.³⁹ U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency officials told us that the Army does not have a time frame for assessing the remaining positions due to a current focus on non-headquarters assessments.

The Air Force Has Assessed Personnel Requirements at Some of Its Reserve Components' Headquarters, but Not in the Time Frames Set Forth in Guidance

Since November 2013, the Air Force has assessed some of its Reserve Components' headquarters' personnel requirements, but these assessments have not been conducted by all relevant organizations⁴⁰ or in the time frames specified in guidance.⁴¹ First, according to officials, the Air Force has assessed personnel requirements for all of the functional offices that comprise the Office of the Chief of the Air Force Reserve and Headquarters, Air Force Reserve Command, but has not assessed Headquarters, Air National Guard or the Office of the Director, Air National Guard since November 2013. Second, although the Air Force has assessed the Office of the Chief of the Air Force Reserve and Headquarters, Air Force Reserve Command, it has not consistently followed the schedule for the biannual—or twice yearly—assessment of personnel requirements as specified in guidance. Air Force officials told us these assessments have instead generally occurred every 1 or 2 years.

In our November 2013 report, we recommended that the Secretary of the Air Force modify the Air Force's guidance to require that the Air Force Reserve headquarters and the Office of the Director, Air National Guard have their personnel requirements reassessed on a recurring basis, and establish and implement a schedule for such assessments.⁴² In response to our recommendation, the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Office revised the Air Force's guidance in January 2014 to require the development of a schedule to assess personnel requirements.

³⁹According to Army officials, the U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency tracking sheet provides the status of all full-time support models, studies, and concept plans, which address all full-time support requirements in the Army headquarters elements.

⁴⁰We did not obtain data from the three numbered Air Forces as they were not included in the scope of our review.

⁴¹Air Force Instruction 38-201, *Management of Manpower Requirements and Authorizations*, chap. 9 (Jan. 30, 2014).

⁴²[GAO-14-71](#).

However, we found that the revised guidance does not clearly communicate that all Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters must conduct these personnel assessments. For example, Air National Guard officials told us that the guidance on assessing headquarters did not apply to their organization. Air Force Instruction 38-201, Management of Manpower Requirements and Authorizations, directs Major Command staff to review and apply manpower standards at least every 2 years, or earlier if dictated by a change in workload. An official from the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Office clarified that this guidance on assessments does apply to all Air National Guard headquarters organizations, including Headquarters, Air National Guard and the Office of the Director, Air National Guard. Additionally, this official told us that Air Force guidance on reassessing headquarters should be used in tandem with supplemental Air Force Instruction 38-204 (Apr. 21, 2015), which requires adjustments to personnel requirements as a result of workload or mission changes for a complete understanding of the scope and applicability of the policies. Taken together, this official stated that these two guidance documents outline that all headquarters' organizations should conduct the assessments. However, Air National Guard officials told us that it was unclear that the assessment and supplemental guidance should be used together. The official from the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Office told us that the Air Force would modify the existing guidance within the year to clarify that all Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters should conduct assessments of personnel requirements.

In subsequent discussions with Air Force officials, we also found that they are unclear as to how often personnel requirements should be assessed. For example, although Air Force guidance states that these assessments are to be conducted biannually—or twice yearly—Air Force, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard officials told us they understood the requirement to mean that assessments are to be conducted every two years. If biannual assessments are desired, then the Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters have not conducted several cycles of assessments of personnel requirements since January 2014 when the guidance was last revised.

Unless the existing guidance is revised to clarify how often all Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters should assess personnel requirements, the Air Force may not have the assurance it desires that these assessments are consistently conducted as required to appropriately size its Reserve Components' headquarters.

The National Guard Bureau Has Not Had the Results of Its Recent Assessment of Personnel Requirements Externally Validated

Although the National Guard Bureau has recently assessed its personnel requirements, these personnel requirements have not been validated by a DOD organization external to the Bureau, as required in DOD guidance and as we previously recommended. Our analysis shows that from fiscal year 2014 through 2016, the total number of authorized full-time support positions for the National Guard Bureau decreased from 3,856 to about 3,071—a net decrease of 20 percent. The DOD directive governing the National Guard Bureau provides that the Bureau’s personnel requirements should be managed in the same manner as other joint activities to the greatest extent possible, and that joint activities are generally subject to the Joint Staff’s Joint Manpower and Personnel Program. According to officials, this program includes review, approval, and documentation of a headquarters’ personnel requirements by an external organization. In our November 2013 report, we found that under an informal agreement with the Joint Staff, the National Guard Bureau had been determining its own personnel requirements without external validation.⁴³ By creating a system whereby an external organization is not independently assessing the National Guard Bureau’s personnel requirements, the bureau has removed an independent check that could help ensure that the bureau is staffed with the appropriate number of personnel needed to execute its assigned missions and workload. As such, we recommended that the National Guard Bureau have its personnel requirements periodically validated by a DOD organization external to the Bureau.⁴⁴ The National Guard Bureau stated that it planned to establish a vetting process with representatives from the Army and Air Force.

In July 2013, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau requested that the U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency—with assistance from the Air Force Personnel Center—conduct an advisory analysis of the personnel

⁴³ [GAO-14-71](#).

⁴⁴ Army and Air Force assessment practices generally include a review of personnel requirements by either a higher-level command or an external organization. For example, Army Regulation 570-4 requires that all personnel requirements for Army organizations must be reviewed and validated by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs with assistance from the U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency. Additionally, this guidance states that the Chief of the National Guard Bureau has the authority to determine full-time support requirements for the National Guards’ Joint Force Headquarters - State. Furthermore, Air Force Instruction 38-201 requires Major Command staff to review manpower standards for applicability and reapply them to subordinate organizations at least every 2 years.

requirements of the National Guard Bureau. According to an official, the U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency accepted the Chief's request for an analysis and began its work in October 2014. Then, with assistance from the Air Force Personnel Center, the U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency completed an assessment of the Bureau's personnel requirements in January 2015 and issued the results and recommendations for each Bureau organizational component studied in February 2015. According to the U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency's report, this assessment provided a strategic look at the headquarters' organizational structure by analyzing missions, mapping processes, and assessing workload to develop personnel requirements and provisional organizational structure.⁴⁵ As outlined in the Chief of the National Guard Bureau Instruction 1701.01, Manpower and Organization Policies and Standards, which calls for periodic validation of the Bureau's personnel requirements by the Director of the National Guard Joint Staff, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau approved the overall recommendations of the February 2015 assessment. National Guard Bureau officials told us they believe the assessments completed in January 2015 by the Army and Air Force manpower analysis agencies address the intent of our recommendation. The Chief also established a target date of May 2016 for completion of all actions related to personnel assessment, including validation.⁴⁶

With the issuance of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau's Instruction and the U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency's assessment effort, the Bureau has taken some steps to determine its personnel requirements. Further, National Guard Bureau officials' told us that its February 2015 assessment serves as a validation and fully complies with our November 2013 recommendation. However, we believe these efforts do not address the intent of our recommendation because the U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency's advisory analysis, which stemmed from a one-time request, resulted in an assessment of the National Guard Bureau's personnel requirements, and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau remains the final validating authority for the Bureau's requirements; therefore, these actions do not constitute an external validation of the

⁴⁵U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency, *Report on the Manpower & Organizational Assessment of National Guard Bureau* (Feb. 23, 2015).

⁴⁶As of August 2016, the National Guard Bureau has not confirmed whether this date was met.

Bureau's personnel requirements. Without an organization external to the National Guard Bureau—such as the U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency or the Air Force Personnel Center—independently validating the Bureau's personnel requirements on a periodic basis, both DOD and Congress will lack assurance that the Bureau's size and structure is appropriate for its mission. As such, we continue to believe that our prior recommendation has not been fully implemented.

The Army National Guard Has Assessed Nearly Half of Its Personnel Requirements across the Joint Force Headquarters – State since November 2013, but the Air National Guard and National Guard Bureau Have Not

Since November 2013, the Army National Guard has assessed nearly half of its staff elements' personnel requirements across the 54 National Guards' Joint Force Headquarters – State, but the Air National Guard and the National Guard Bureau have not assessed personnel requirements of the Air and Joint staff elements at the 54 headquarters, respectively. In addition, the National Guard Bureau has not issued guidance that includes a process to collaborate when determining personnel requirements for joint functions, or established a process for holistically assessing all three elements at these headquarters, as we previously recommended.

The Army National Guard Has Assessed Nearly Half of Its Personnel Requirements at the Joint Force Headquarters – State since November 2013

The Army National Guard Directorate, which is responsible for assessing the personnel requirements of its Army staff element at each of the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State, has assessed nearly half of these requirements for the Army National Guard at these state Joint Headquarters since November 2013, according to a National Guard official. For example, this official told us that the Army National Guard Directorate, with the help of the U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency, has assessed 8,128 of the 18,730 (43 percent) Army staff elements' total personnel requirements, and that these determinations were made using validated requirements models of various offices and functional areas at each Joint Force Headquarters – State. Specifically, according to a December 2013 memorandum from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, the Army used a validated personnel requirements model to determine its fiscal year 2014

requirements for functional areas within the Army National Guard's U.S. Property and Fiscal Offices, such as command group, data processing, and comptroller. Moreover, similar fiscal years 2014 and 2015 personnel requirements determinations were made for various functional areas of the Army National Guard's ammunition supply point and full-time support brigade and below operational units, among others, between December 2013 and August 2015. Also, according to multiple memoranda from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, the Army National Guard Directorate plans to determine future personnel requirements using existing models that will be re-validated within 3 years from the effective date of each memorandum, or as required by Army guidance.

**The Air National Guard
Has Not Assessed Its
Personnel Requirements
at the Joint Force
Headquarters – State
since November 2013**

Since November 2013, the Office of the Director, Air National Guard—the entity responsible for conducting assessments of Air National Guard personnel requirements—has not assessed the requirements for the Air staff elements within the National Guards' Joint Force Headquarters – State, according to officials. While Air Force guidance directs Air Force Reserve Component headquarters to assess personnel requirements twice yearly, this guidance does not apply to the Air staff element at the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State. Therefore, the Office of the Director, Air National Guard is not required to conduct assessments of the Air staff elements. This is in contrast to the Army, which has a requirement to assess its Army Staff element at the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State. However, Office of the Director, Air National Guard officials told us that despite not having a requirement, the Air National Guard reviewed 594 total personnel requirements in June 2015 by using December 2012 assessment results, and deemed those results to still be valid.⁴⁷

Although the Air National Guard has taken steps to assess its personnel requirements, without having a regular requirement to conduct these assessments in a manner that is consistent with other Air Force Reserve Components, the Office of the Director, Air National Guard may be

⁴⁷Office of the Director, Air National Guard officials stated that of these 594 requirements, the Air elements execute a total of 305 requirements based on resource availability. These officials also told us that, as part of their review, if the maximum number of personnel requirements authorized for each of the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State does not exceed the maximum authorized requirements within each Air staff element by functional and organizational areas—such as public affairs, operations, and human resources—then no subsequent assessment is warranted.

missing opportunities to right-size or shift resources within the Air staff elements more regularly, especially in cases when the number of authorized positions do not match the number of personnel requirements needed to accomplish mission and performance objectives. Moreover, this lack of a regular assessment is inconsistent with DOD policy and Air Force guidance. Specifically, DOD's overarching manpower management directive states that personnel requirements are to be driven by workload, and established at the minimum levels necessary to accomplish mission and performance objectives.⁴⁸ In addition, Air Force Instruction 38-201, Management of Manpower Requirements and Authorizations (Jan. 30, 2014), requires that currency reviews be performed in conjunction with the biannual application of personnel assessment standards. Officials from the Office of the Director, Air National Guard told us that it would be feasible to require that their office assess its Air staff elements at the Joint Force Headquarters – State. Further, in commenting on a draft of this report, DOD stated that the Chief, National Guard Bureau must work with the Joint Force Headquarters – State to determine personnel requirements for the Air staff element of the Joint Force Headquarters – State.

The National Guard Bureau Has Not Assessed the Personnel Requirements for the Joint Staff Elements of Its Joint Force Headquarters – State

The National Guard Bureau shares responsibility with the Army National Guard Directorate and the Office of the Director, Air National Guard for overseeing personnel requirements determination and assessment processes at the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State; however, based on our review of relevant documentation, the National Guard Bureau has not assessed the personnel requirements for the Joint staff element across the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State. This is because guidance for the organizational concept associated with establishing the Joint staff element was finalized in June 2016, even though the Chief of the National Guard Bureau first called for each of the Joint Force Headquarters – State to have a Joint staff element in 2003.⁴⁹

In our November 2013 report, we recommended that DOD minimize the potential for gaps or overlaps at the 54 National Guards' Joint Force Headquarters – State by developing a process for the Army National

⁴⁸DOD Directive 1100.4, *Guidance for Manpower Management* (Feb. 12, 2005).

⁴⁹This arrangement was formally recognized by DOD in 2011 with the issuance of DOD Directive 5105.83, *National Guard Joint Force Headquarters – State* (Jan. 5, 2011) (incorporating changes Sept. 30, 2014).

Guard and Air National Guard to collaborate when determining personnel requirements for joint functions at these headquarters.⁵⁰ DOD partially concurred with our recommendation and stated that when shared functions are being studied, increased coordination efforts should occur between each element to ensure the correct workload is captured, requirements are not duplicated, and process efficiencies are maximized. In addition, National Guard Bureau officials told us that they have conducted a set of initiatives to develop a standardized structure for the Joint staff element. For example, the National Guard Bureau issued guidance in June 2016 that outlines a recommended structure for establishing the Joint staff element at the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State. This draft guidance is comprised of a “31 + 4” positions structure that, according to National Guard Bureau officials, provides the Adjutants General of the States and the Commanding General of the District of Columbia National Guard with flexibility to size and structure personnel requirements within the Joint staff element of their respective Joint Force Headquarters – State.⁵¹ National Guard Bureau officials also stated that this flexibility will allow the 54 headquarters to meet federal and individual state mission requirements within the recommended personnel requirements structure cited in the National Guard Bureau’s guidance.

National Guard Bureau officials also told us that they held monthly discussions between Army and Air Force general officers and various colonels to help develop the National Guard Bureau’s June 2016 guidance. In addition, these officials stated that, during these monthly meetings, participants held conversations on the availability of Army and Air National Guard resources, such as authorized personnel

⁵⁰ [GAO-14-71](#).

⁵¹ According to the guidance and National Guard Bureau officials, the “31+4 Design Model” specifies the baseline maximum staffing for each Joint Force Headquarters – State, where 4 positions are considered to be the minimum number of positions authorized within a headquarters, and an additional 31 positions—for a total of 35—is the maximum number of positions authorized to execute steady-state tasks. According to the guidance, when the “31+4 Design Model” is used in conjunction with the recommended Joint Force Headquarters – State organizational structure to size a Joint staff element, this process will allow the Army National Guard and Air National Guard to recognize “Joint Staff Element” positions on their respective personnel requirements documents.

requirements, and the information obtained from these discussions helped shape and refine the guidance.⁵²

In reviewing the National Guard Bureau's June 2016 guidance, however, we found that it does not include a process for the Army and Air staff to collaborate when determining personnel requirements for joint positions within the Joint staff elements at the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State. Additionally, National Guard Bureau officials do not know how many states use the Joint staff element concept because, according to Bureau officials, the National Guard Bureau does not currently track this information across the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State. Officials told us they will, however, establish procedures to track the use of the Joint staff element across the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State once the National Guard Bureau issues its draft guidance. As a result, the National Guard Bureau has not assessed the personnel requirements at the Joint staff elements. Issuing its draft guidance to implement a consistent structure across all of the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State, along with implementing a process to collaborate when determining personnel requirements for joint positions—as we concluded in November 2013—would better position the National Guard Bureau to holistically determine, assess, and validate personnel requirements within all three of these headquarters' staff elements on a periodic basis, to ensure the Army, Air, and Joint staff elements can achieve their required missions. Consequently, we continue to believe that our prior recommendation has not been fully implemented.

Conclusions

Since our last report in November 2013 on DOD's Army and Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters, both the Army and the Air Force have taken steps to assess the number of personnel requirements at their Reserve Components to, among other things, determine the minimum level needed to accomplish their missions and promote cost-effective use of resources. However, the Air Force has experienced some confusion with its guidance related to these assessments. First, not all Air Force organizations understood that the guidance applied to them, which the Air Force plans to address with revised guidance within the year. In addition, Air Force Reserve Component headquarters are unclear whether the requirement is to conduct assessments twice yearly, or every 2 years. As

⁵²According to National Guard Bureau officials, the expected ratio of Army National Guard to Air National Guard personnel within the joint structure is generally 3-to-1.

the Air Force revises its existing guidance to clarify to which organizations it applies, it also has the opportunity to clarify the frequency with which it would like its organizations to conduct these assessments.

In addition, the Office of the Director, Air National Guard does not have adequate assurance that its current process for assessing personnel requirements for the Air staff element at the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State serves to accurately match personnel authorizations to the needs of these elements. Without an ongoing requirement, similar to the Army staff element, to conduct regular assessments of Air National Guard personnel requirements at the 54 Joint Force Headquarters – State, the Office of the Director, Air National Guard may not be able to ensure that the total number of authorized Air staff element positions meets the number of personnel requirements needed to carry out their missions.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To facilitate oversight of the size of DOD's Reserve Components' headquarters and ensure that they have the minimum personnel needed to complete their assigned missions, we are making the following two recommendations.

To ensure that its Reserve Components' headquarters are conducting assessments with sufficient frequency, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Air Force to, when updating its existing guidance to clarify to which organizations it applies, also clarify whether assessments should be conducted twice yearly or every 2 years, or at some other frequency.

To ensure that the Office of the Director, Air National Guard has the number of personnel needed to accomplish their missions and performance objectives at the Joint Force Headquarters – State, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Air Force, in coordination with the Chief, National Guard Bureau, to require assessments of Air Staff element personnel requirements at the Joint Force Headquarters – State.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to DOD for review and comment. In written comments, which are summarized and reprinted in appendix II, DOD concurred with our first recommendation and partially concurred with our second recommendation. DOD also provided technical comments, which we have incorporated into the report, as appropriate.

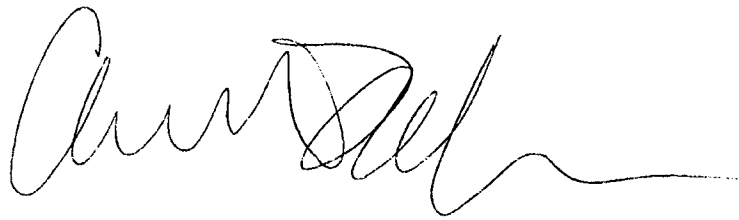
In concurring with our first recommendation to update existing guidance to also clarify the frequency of its personnel requirements assessments, DOD stated that the Air Force will do so for applicable headquarters activities in this year's update to its existing guidance.

In partially concurring with our second recommendation that the Air National Guard require assessments of Air Staff element personnel requirements at the Joint Force Headquarters – State, DOD noted that the Air Force can only provide and develop factors, tools, and overarching industrial and management engineering methodologies to accurately quantify essential manpower required for the effective and efficient accomplishment of capabilities supporting oversight of Air Force forces. DOD also noted that the Joint Force Headquarters – State are not active Air Force organizations, and the National Guard Bureau and the Joint Force Headquarters – State must determine National Guard Bureau and state missions. Given this, we have revised our recommendation to reflect that the Secretary of the Air Force, in coordination with the Chief, National Guard Bureau, require assessments of Air Staff element personnel requirements at the Joint Force Headquarters – State.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees and the Secretary of Defense; the Secretary of the Army; the Secretary of the Air Force; the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Chief, National Guard Bureau; the Chief, Army Reserve; and the Chief, Air Force Reserve. The report also is available at no charge on GAO's website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (213) 830-1011 or vonaha@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices

of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Key contributors to this report are listed in appendix III.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew J. Von Ah', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew J. Von Ah
Acting Director
Defense Capabilities and Management

Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

To describe the trends in authorized positions at Army and Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters, and the Army and Air staff elements of the four National Guards' Joint Force Headquarters – State we selected—Delaware, Georgia, New Jersey, and Texas—since fiscal year 2013, we reviewed data on authorized full-time support positions at the following Army and Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters: Army National Guard Directorate; Office of the Director, Air National Guard; Headquarters, Air National Guard; Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve; U.S. Army Reserve Command; Office of the Chief of the Air Force Reserve; and Headquarters, Air Force Reserve Command,¹ from fiscal year 2013 through fiscal year 2016.² Data were not available for authorized positions of the Joint staff elements in the Joint Force Headquarters – State. We focused our review on these full-time support positions given the high percentage of these positions in some Reserve Component headquarters identified in our November 2013 review. We selected these years to identify changes, if any, that have occurred in the Reserve Components' headquarters' and the National Guards' Joint Force Headquarters – States' Army and Air staff elements' size and structure since our last review in November 2013, by using fiscal year 2013 as our relevant baseline year for comparison and reporting purposes. Because our prior work focused on the seven Army and Air

¹The Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve and the Office of the Chief of the Air Force Reserve are staff organizations that execute actions determined by their respective Headquarters organizations, which are identified as Major Headquarters Activities in DOD Instruction 5100.73, *Major DOD Headquarters Activities* (Dec. 1, 2007) (incorporating changes June 12, 2012). This instruction defines Major Headquarters Activities as those headquarters (and the direct support integral to their operation) whose primary mission is to manage or command the programs and operations of DOD, its components, and their major military units, organizations, or agencies. However, the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve and the Office of the Chief of the Air Force Reserve are not designated as Major DOD Headquarters Activities.

²In our previous report, we found that for fiscal year 2013 nearly 100 percent of the positions funded for the National Guard Bureau; Office of the Director, Air National Guard; Army National Guard Directorate; U.S. Army Reserve Command; and Headquarters, Air Force Reserve, were for full-time support. Consequently, in our current review, we focused on full-time support positions. See GAO, *Defense Management: Actions Needed to Ensure National Guard and Reserve Headquarters Are Sized to Be Efficient*, [GAO-14-71](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 12, 2013).

Force Reserve Components' headquarters organizations³ cited above, we chose to focus on these headquarters for this current work for consistency.⁴ For similar reasons, we also selected the same non-generalizable sample of four Joint Force Headquarters – State reviewed in our November 2013 report—Delaware, Georgia, New Jersey, and Texas—as case studies to obtain perspectives from state officials on efforts associated with assessing their state's personnel requirements.

To conduct our analysis of the Army Reserve Components' headquarters, we used personnel authorization information documented on tables of distribution and allowances, and to conduct our analysis of the National Guards' Joint Force Headquarters – States' Army staff elements, we used personnel authorization information documented on vouchers, because this was the most appropriate information to use for conducting our analysis, according to Army National Guard officials. For the Air Force, these headquarters had their personnel authorizations documented on unit manning documents. We collaborated with Army and Air National Guard and Reserve officials to obtain these personnel documents and verify the data received. To ensure the reliability of the personnel authorization data, we interviewed knowledgeable officials about the data and internal controls on the systems that contain them. Finally, we shared our analysis of the data with knowledgeable agency officials and asked them to verify its accuracy. On the basis of these steps, we determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this audit.

To evaluate the extent to which the Department of Defense (DOD) has assessed its Reserve Component headquarters, we reviewed relevant service-specific guidance and documentation. We also interviewed officials from Army and Air Force offices including the U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency; the Air Force Manpower Analysis Agency; and Headquarters, Air Force Reserve Command about their roles in and views of their respective efforts to assess personnel requirements data and their efforts related to implementing the Deputy Secretary of Defense's memo on reducing headquarters' personnel funding by 25

³Our review focuses on the National Guard Bureau; Army National Guard Directorate; Office of the Director, Air National Guard; Headquarters, Air National Guard; Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve; U.S. Army Reserve Command; Office of the Chief of the Air Force Reserve; and Headquarters, Air Force Reserve Command, as well as, four select Joint Force Headquarters – State.

⁴[GAO-14-71](#).

percent.⁵ Where available, we analyzed manpower assessments and related documents to understand the status of assessments conducted since November 2013; however, we did not evaluate the results of these assessments.

To evaluate the extent to which DOD has assessed personnel requirements for the Army, Air, and Joint staff elements of the National Guards' Joint Force Headquarters – State since November 2013, we evaluated the National Guard Bureau's, Army National Guard Directorate's, and the Office of the Director, Air National Guard's implementation processes for assessing personnel requirements at these headquarters by reviewing relevant guidance and documentation. We also interviewed officials from the Joint Staff, National Guard Bureau, Army National Guard, and Air National Guard about their roles in and views of their respective efforts to assess personnel requirements data.

A complete list of organizations we interviewed is listed in table 2.

Table 2. Organizations GAO Interviewed

Department	Organization
Department of Defense	• Joint Chiefs of Staff (Joint Staff/J-1)
	• National Guard Bureau
	• Office of the Secretary of Defense
Army	• Army National Guard Directorate
	• Assistant Secretary of the Army, Manpower & Reserve Affairs
	• Headquarters, Department of the Army G1 Directorate
	• Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve
	• U.S. Army Human Resources Command
	• U.S. Army Force Management Agency
	• U.S. Army Forces Command
	• U.S. Army Manpower Analysis Agency
	• U.S. Army Reserve Command
	• 99th Regional Support Command

⁵Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Cost Reduction Targets for Major Headquarters* (Aug. 24, 2015).

Department	Organization
Air Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Force Directorate for Manpower, Organization and Resources • Air Force Manpower Analysis Agency • Headquarters, Air Force Reserve Command • Office of the Director, Air National Guard • Headquarters, Air National Guard • Headquarters, Air Force Reserve • Office of the Chief, Air Force Reserve • Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs • 22nd Air Force
State Headquarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Forces Headquarters – State for Delaware • Joint Forces Headquarters – State for Georgia • Joint Forces Headquarters – State for New Jersey • Joint Forces Headquarters – State for Texas

Source: GAO. | GAO-16-538

We conducted this performance audit from August 2015 to August 2016 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: Comments from the Department of Defense



MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

JUL 28 2016

Mr. Andrew J. Von Ah
Acting Director, Defense Capabilities Management
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington DC 20548

Dear Mr. Von Ah,

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the GAO Draft Report, GAO-16-538, 'NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES: Air Force Needs to Consistently Assess Personnel Requirements to Appropriately Size Its Headquarters Reserve Components,' dated June 14, 2016 (GAO Code 100253).

The Department appreciates the GAO's work on this engagement, as well as the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. The below constitutes the Department's response to the GAO's recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Air Force to, when updating its existing guidance to clarify to which organizations it applies, also clarify whether assessments should be conducted twice yearly or every two years, or at some other frequency.

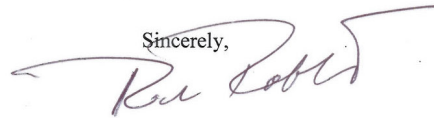
DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Air Force will clarify the frequency of assessments of applicable headquarters activities in this year's update to its existing guidance.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Air Force to direct the Office of the Director, Air National Guard to require assessments of Air Staff element personnel requirements at the Joint Force Headquarters-State.

DoD RESPONSE: Partially concur. The Air Force can only provide and develop factors, tools and overarching industrial and management engineering methodologies to accurately quantify essential manpower required for the effective and efficient accomplishment of capabilities supporting oversight of Air Force forces. Joint Force Headquarters-State are not Active USAF organizations. Accordingly, the National Guard Bureau and the States must determine personnel requirements associated with National Guard Bureau and state missions.

Should you have any questions, please contact my primary action officer for this engagement, Mr. Thomas Hessel at 703-697-3402 or thomas.j.hessel.civ@mail.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Rich Robbins", with a stylized flourish extending to the left.

Rich Robbins
Director, Total Force Planning &
Requirements

Appendix III: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Andrew J. Von Ah, Acting Director, 213-830-1011 or vonaha@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, the following staff members made key contributions to this report: Tina Won Sherman, Assistant Director; Yecenia C. Camarillo, Ashley D. Houston, Amie Lesser, Felicia M. Lopez, Michael D. Silver, and Erik Wilkins-McKee.

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